1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

776 Many of the daily occurrences can be traced to their activity. They are sometimes friendly, but it actually happens that they are more often unfriendly and do their best to injure and annoy human beings. The Kols have mentioned certain kinds of spirits with which they are familiar. A few Kols have claimed actual encounters with them, and yet others were not quite so certain of their existence.

775 761 *The Bhut* is commonly mentioned by the Kol, but the use of the term is frequently in a general sense. Ordinarily this is the spirit of one who has died a sudden or a tragic death. A *bhut* is always of the male gender. The spirit of a man killed by a train is sure to become a wandering *bhut*. So is the spirit of a murdered man, as well as one dying of a dread disease. The general belief is that it will remain in this form for twelve years until released. In a general sense, any man not taken up by Bhagawan after death becomes a wandering *bhut*. [165] Another curious explanation was given. It was claimed that the expectation of life for a Kol is about thirty years, and for this period one must dwell on earth, whether in the body or in the spirit. If a person twenty years of age should die for any reason, his spirit will still have to stay upon the earth for another ten years, and will wander in the form of a *bhut*. A man living past thirty years of age will not become a *bhut* unless he meets a tragic end. The same group also related that during this unexpired period in which the spirit must wander upon the earth, the spirit of a very good man becomes a very evil *bhut*, while the spirit of a very bad man was a friendly and harmless *bhut*!

775 682 The *bhut* of a murdered man is certain to haunt the murderer's family and in the course of time is sure to destroy it. Murder thus means only more trouble and Kols should never resort to it. It is a fact that murders among Kols are very unusual. *Bhuts* as a rule never injure members of their own families and will even help them. Therefore the Kol holds that one should never fear the spirit of a loved one.

775 *Bhuts* and other spirits may enter a room as does the air which comes in everywhere; though the average Kol usually considers that they enter through some larger opening in the house, such as a door [342] or a window. The lack of windows in Kol houses is partly due to this point of view.

The Churel is the spirit of a female who has died in distressing circumstances, especially if the death was caused by child bearing. The *churel* is of dreadful appearance, and her feet, if one would look at them, are turned backwards. She often attempts to seduce men and ruin them. As a rule her front is attractive but she is black and

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159 and five children, two from the first wife and three from the second and we are living happily.

MOTIRAM: A KOL WHO BECAME A PROSPEROUS FARMER

I was born in Kotmi (in North East Central Provinces near Pendra). My grandfather came to Kotmi from a place in Rewa State and when he arrived here he had with him my father who was still just a boy. My father was a hard working man and when his father died he had to shift for himself and found work as a coolie wherever he could find employment. Finally he got together enough money to be able to purchase the right to farm a small bit of land. This land was obtained from the *malguzar* who was very kind to him. When I was still a very small boy and not long after we got this land my grandmother, who had lived to a ripe old age, died happily for she saw my father established on a piece of land he could call his own. My father had two brothers who also owned a share of the land and [428] helped start the farming, but both of them died without issue, leaving the control of the land with us alone. As soon as I was old enough to work I would go out with my father to tend the cattle in the forests. Later on I went by myself. When I was about twenty years of age my father died, but I had been married before that and I began to control the land and care for it.

I am now quite independent and all along have never had to work as a coolie for another person. I am very proud of this fact. I even hire other people to work for me for I now have twenty-two acres of land with a good house of thick mud walls upon it and cattle [651] sheds as well. I have about thirty animals: goats, cows and bullocks. I pay a yearly land tax to the *malguzar* of Rs. 9, and a tax on my carts and animals which amounts to Rs. 7 per year.

My family consists of four sons and one daughter. Two sons and one daughter are now married and live here in the same home with [871] me. They help me care for the fields and crops. A younger son goes regularly to the Mission School in Kotmi and studies in the third Hindi [481] class. I am glad that this son can get an education and I pay the regular fees for him. He is very clever, walks two miles to school and is very regular in his attendance.

Although I have always had money for our food and have never suffered that way, still we have suffered much through illnesses and death. We go often to the Mission dispensary in Kotmi for our [165 163] medicines. My first wife died but not before giving birth to seven

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children, three of whom are now dead. They died of fevers and smallpox. I was married a second time and this wife has had but one child—the boy who is now going to school.

People around here count me one of the rich and well-to-do farmers of Kotmi, even though I am now only 35 years of age. I am now engaged in a controversy over a piece of land and the *panch* has not been able to settle it to my satisfaction. I have threatened to take the matter to court and I hope the *panch* will do the right thing.

Phaggu: A Kol who Returned to the Old Paths[1]

My father was born in Barela and he held a few acres of land and farmed them and gained sufficient wealth to make us independent. He had nine children, five of them were boys and four were girls. Two of the sisters are now living, while two are dead. The time came when my father could not profitably farm his land so a Mohammedan of influence bought the field and father worked for him in the same field for forty or forty-five years. My elder brother is working as a factory coolie in Jubbulpore and I work as a coolie in Barela.

I too was born here in Barela. My father died when I was about thirty years of age. I did not get any share of my father's property, for when he died I was not at home but in Nagpur. I lived at home with my father for eighteen years and was then married. I started to school, but could not continue to study because the school master used to punish his students very much and once when he tried to punish me I tripped him up and he fell and hurt his head. I was then in the first Hindi. This was during the great famine.

By the grace of Narayan we did not die of hunger during this awful famine, for we had enough to eat, especially those first eighteen years when I never thought of hard work such as coolie work. When I was eighteen I took a rupee from father and set off for Nagpur and travelled without a ticket all the day. I would get off the train at every station and as the train started I used to get in another compartment. Thus I reached Balaghat and got a job in the Manganese mines where I worked for about ten years. I could not earn anything there except enough to feed me:

Jahan jao bhag,
Wahan lage Ag.
Age Age sab Sanichar ja raha hai
Tu kahan ja raha hai?

1. See Frontispiece and plate XXVII.